

UNAPPROVED

Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission - Public Hearing/ Public Meeting , February 17, 2010

The Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission held a Public Hearing/Public Meeting on Wednesday February 17, 2010 at 7:30 P.M. in the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT 06109.

Members Present: Lawrence Buck, Acting Chairman
 David Forrest @ 7:34
 Frank Morris
 Vincent Fiume
 Brent M. Owen
 Matthew Zagaja

Also Present: Don Moisa, Wetlands Agent

6 (six) persons in the audience

Acting Chairman Buck opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

GENERAL COMMENTS

No comments.

PUBLIC HEARING

Application No. 596-09 E/S, Town of Wethersfield, Wethersfield Cove, Parcel No. 252-002
Application to construct new boat ramp and new docking system.

At 7:31 Acting Chairman Buck continued the public hearing.

The following correspondence had been received:

Memo dated February 12, 2010 from Donald Moisa containing test probe results
Flood Contingency Plan from Ocean and Coastal Consultants, Inc. received Feb. 12, 2010 by the
Wethersfield Engineering Division.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, did a quick review of the project explaining that the application is to consolidate 3 docks into 1 dock in the middle area of the cove and have an adjacent boat ramp.

Ms. Bagley began to address questions raised by the Commission at the January 20, 2010 meeting.

Ms. Bagley explained that the process to determine a location for the dock and ramp began in the summer of 2006 with meetings with Town staff and the public and looked at the whole site for possible locations.

One area considered was the area to the south of the warehouse in the area of the present police dock.

This area was determined not suitable due to very steep slopes, access, parking and traffic problems.

Other options considered were; floating docks with a fixed pier in front of the warehouse, a floating dock with a concrete sidewall in front of the warehouse, a floating dock without the concrete sidewall but with a movable float and piers, all of which would increase the environmental impact and prevent vehicle access across the front of the warehouse.

The rest of the site was considered and it was determined that the center of the cove area would be the best location.

Ocean and Coastal Consultants were hired to look at the site objectively and provide their input into the selection process.

The existing contour of the land was a consideration in determining where the ramp should be located.

Locating the ramp to the north or south of the proposed location would require more excavation and more impact due to the contours.

Positioning the ramp as shown would cause minimum impact.

At the January 20, 2010 meeting the Commission suggested some test probes or holes to determine if ledge would be encountered.

Town staff had done test probes and test holes to determine if ledge would be encountered; it appeared from the results that the excavation would not be getting down into the refusal depths.

Soil sample testing for contaminated soil had not been done.

There had been water testing done several years back but nothing in the Town records had been found or any record of soil testing having been done.

Soil borings and testing would be part of the DEP process and a requirement before a DEP permit would be issued.

Ms. Bagley explained the process as they go forward would be to go back to Planning and Zoning and the Town Council before going on to DEP and the Army Corps of Engineers, and would then return to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission if any revisions were required by DEP.

Commissioner Morris questioned the ability of drivers to back a trailer straight down for that length of ramp and also the cost of the ramp and docks

Ms. Bagley introduced Azure Dee Sleicher PE of Ocean and Coastal Consultants, Inc.

Ms. Sleicher explained that the ramp design was the standard design for length and slope for boat ramps.

Everything had been done from an engineering standpoint to make the ramp design as user friendly as possible.

Ms. Sleicher also addressed the other locations considered for the ramp and dock and explained that other locations would have a far greater environmental impact as far as excavation or filling and also take up a larger portion of the parking lot.

Commissioners questioned if the old ramp would still be retained, if the elastic anchors could withstand a 20' tide change, what the estimated cost was, if any contingencies would be built into the contract in the event that contaminated soil were found, what was the standard range of slopes for a ramp, if a less steep slope would allow for easier movement of vehicles across the ramp from Main St. toward Hanmer Rd. and also reduce the amount of cut excavation, also the question of moving the ramp to the North side of the existing traffic island to address Mr. Dorchy's concerns of traffic, reduce excavation, and allow more room for launching error.

Ms. Bagley stated that the old ramp would remain as an alternative.

The estimated cost for Phase I (floating dock, movable float walkway) \$390,000

The estimated cost for PhaseII (boat ramp & portable walkway) \$710,000

Ms. Bagley would be hoping to possibly use grant money and boating fees to pay for the project.

Ms. Sleicher has made contact with elastic anchor manufacturers and had been assured by the manufacturers that they could make a product that would meet the design criteria and be able to withstand the tidal range.

Ms. Sleicher explained that DEP would require soil testing before issuing a permit so it would be known if hazardous materials would be encountered before the start of the project.

The ramp is designed with a 9% slope; standard for boat ramps is 8-9%, Ms. Sleicher would look into flattening the slope if possible.

Ms. Sleicher explained that moving the ramp to the north would require a large amount of fill to achieve the 8% minimum slope and use up some parking areas.

The slopes where the launch is proposed is at or near the desired slope without much need for excavation and or significant amounts of fill, which is unachievable due to being in the flood zone.

Moving the launch would not achieve the operational condition in minor storm events that currently render the existing launch useless.

Commissioner Morris pointed out that the existing ramp could be repaired with a few loads of 2" stone at a lot less cost.

Acting Chairman Buck explained that the cost is not really the mandate of this Commission and that there would be other opportunities to speak to the cost issue at another time.

Acting Chairman Buck asked if anyone from the public would like to speak on this application.

Mr. Orlo Powell of 473 Wolcott Hill Rd. had the following questions:

How much fill material is proposed?

Who made the cost estimate?

What is the cost of the contract engineering and how much has been expended?

What is the water level at which a person would be able to launch?

What is the base material to be used under the ramp?

Acting Chairman Buck replied that the cost estimates were provided by the consultant and it would not be appropriate to ask for contract engineering fees.

Ms. Bagley and Ms. Sliecher responded that there would be a net removal and only 660 cu.yd. of excavation and no fill, the boat ramp would be usable to water surface Elev. 9.0, material under the ramp would be concrete planks on a bed of crushed stone in the 2" range.

Acting Chairman Buck commented that a certain amount of use would be for emergency personnel, fire, police and that the current slope is too flat to launch if the water reaches elevation 4 or 5.

Lacking any further comments or questions from either the applicant, commissioners or the public Acting Chairman Buck declared the Public Hearing closed at 8:00 PM.

PUBLIC MEETING

Application No. 596-09 E/S, Town of Wethersfield, Wethersfield Cove, Parcel No. 252-002

Application to construct new boat ramp and new docking system.

Acting Chairman Buck explained to the applicant the voting procedure and the requirement of 5 affirmative votes in favor for an application to pass, and also gave the applicant the option to postpone a vote to a future meeting.

Commissioner Forrest commented that in the past 2-3 meetings a number of questions had been raised of the consultant and the town and the consultant and the town had satisfied the concerns and he was comfortable moving ahead.

Commissioner Owen initially had questions of the alternatives considered and concerns of the impact to the environment, and now understanding that the process started years ago, was also comfortable moving ahead.

Commissioner Morris pointed out that it wouldn't take much to fix the existing asphalt ramp with some loads of crushed stone, and be able to launch 10 boats.

Acting Chairman Buck pointed out that making an approval conditional upon maintenance to the existing ramp would be beyond the scope of this application.

Motion by Commissioner Zagaja to Approve seconded by Commissioner Forrest.

During discussions Kathy Bagley requested that the application be tabled and continued at the March meeting to allow participation by the full Commission.

No vote taken

Motion by Commissioner Zagaja seconded by Commissioner Fiume to table the application.

All voted in favor. Motion Passed.

Village Cemetery

Don Moisa reported he had received a complaint of filling or dumping in the wetland area behind the maintenance building at the Village Cemetery. It appeared that the activity was on the uphill side where filling had occurred some time in the past and there was no recent activity directly in the wetlands. The activity consisted primarily of recent cut trees and stumps. It was difficult to determine what was new and what was old activity. Photos of the area were handed out.

Paul Hallisey and Dave Kelly representing the Village Cemetery explained that most of the down and cut up trees happened from the Tornado or storm damage this past summer.

The Commission felt there were no wetlands concerns at this point and would rely on staff to watch over the area.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Approval of Minutes - Meeting January 20, 2010
(AM,DF,FM,LB,JH,VF,BO,)
Motion by Commissioner Forrest seconded by Commissioner Fiume to approve the Minutes of the meeting of January 20, 2010 as presented.
All Commissioners present at the meeting voted in favor. Motion passed
2. Village Cemetery report on complaint
3. Correspondence (No Action Required)
 - a. DEP notification of a presentation about Habitat Management Guidelines
 - b. Connecticut Farm Bureau Assoc. 1st Annual Statewide Conference

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Owen, seconded by Commissioner Morris to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the minutes approved by the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission.

Don Moisa, Wetlands Agent

Date